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Readings Booklet

June 2001



English 33

Part B: Reading

Grade 12 Diploma Examination

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June 2001

English 33

Part B: Reading

Readings Booklet

Grade 12 Diploma Examination

Description

Part B: Reading contributes 50% of the total English 33 Diploma Examination mark.

There are 8 reading selections in the Readings Booklet and 70 questions in the Questions Booklet.

Time: This examination was developed to be completed in 2 hours; however, you may take an additional $\frac{1}{2}$ hour to complete the examination.

Budget your time carefully.

Instructions

- Be sure that you have an English 33 Readings Booklet **and** an English 33 Questions Booklet.
- You may **not** use a dictionary, thesaurus, or other reference materials.



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I. Questions 1 to 7 in your Questions Booklet are based on this poem.

HOMEcoming

- 2:00 a.m. our daughter asleep
in the backseat
we approach our hometown
diffuse yellowing of night sky
5 above the scrubline¹
familiar fog
airport light revolving
eye always open
on the moist darkness
10 —regardless of our absences.
- As children we lay awake
in separate houses
yours in town
mine in the country
15 kept company
by this bright sweeping
of our night windows
opening onto dark streets
deep orchard.
- 20 Now this metronome² of light
reappears on our horizon
as affirmation
another rhythm
in common
25 marking our intimate journeying
through nocturnal time.

Harry Thurston

Nova Scotia-born Thurston is a free-lance
journalist, poet, and playwright who has
received numerous literary awards.

¹scrubline—silhouette formed by bushes and small trees

²metronome—device used to mark a steady beat for music

II. Questions 8 to 16 in your Questions Booklet are based on this excerpt from a short story.

from THE LEAP

My mother is the surviving half of a blindfold trapeze act, not a fact I think about much even now that she is sightless, the result of encroaching and stubborn cataracts. She walks slowly through her house here in New Hampshire, lightly touching her way along walls and running her hands over knickknacks, books, the drift of a grown child's belongings and castoffs. She has never upset an object or as much as brushed a magazine onto the floor. She has never lost her balance or bumped into a closet door left carelessly open.

It has occurred to me that the catlike precision of her movements in old age might be the result of her early training, but she shows so little of the drama or flair one might expect from a performer that I tend to forget the Flying Avalons. She has kept no sequined costume, no photographs, no fliers or posters from that part of her youth. . . .

I owe her my existence three times. The first when she saved herself. In the town square a replica tent pole, cracked and splintered, now stands cast in concrete. It commemorates the disaster that put our town smack on the front page of the Boston and New York tabloids. It is from those old newspapers, now historical records, that I get my information. Not from my mother, Anna of the Flying Avalons, nor from any of her in-laws, nor certainly from the other half of her particular act, Harold Avalon, her first husband. In one news account it says, "The day was mildly overcast, but nothing in the air or temperature gave any hint of the sudden force with which the deadly gale would strike." . . .

As the clouds gathered outside, unnoticed, the ringmaster cracked his whip, shouted his introduction, and pointed to the ceiling of the tent, where the Flying Avalons were perched.

They loved to drop gracefully from nowhere, like two sparkling birds, and blow kisses as they threw off their plumed helmets and high-collared capes. They laughed and flirted openly as they beat their way up again on the trapeze bars. In the final vignette of their act, they actually would kiss in midair, pausing, almost hovering as they swooped past one another. On the ground, between bows, Harry Avalon would skip quickly to the front rows and point out the smear of my mother's lipstick, just off the edge of his mouth. They made a romantic pair all right, especially in the blindfold sequence.

That afternoon, as the anticipation increased, as Mr. and Mrs. Avalon tied sparkling strips of cloth onto each other's face and as they puckered their lips in mock kisses, lips destined "never again to meet," as one long breathless article put

Continued

it, the wind rose, miles off, wrapped itself into a cone, and howled. There came a rumble of electrical energy, drowned out by the sudden roll of drums. One detail not mentioned by the press, perhaps unknown—Anna was pregnant at the time, seven months and hardly showing, her stomach muscles were that strong. It
40 seems incredible that she would work high above the ground when any fall could be so dangerous, but the explanation—I know from watching her go blind—is that my mother lives comfortably in extreme elements. She is one with the constant dark now, just as the air was her home, familiar to her, safe, before the storm that afternoon.

45 From opposite ends of the tent they waved, blind and smiling, to the crowd below. The ringmaster removed his hat and called for silence, so that the two above could concentrate. They rubbed their hands in chalky powder, then Harry launched himself and swung, once, twice, in huge calibrated beats across space. He hung from his knees and on the third swing stretched wide his arms, held his
50 hands out to receive his pregnant wife as she dove from her shining bar.

It was while the two were in midair, their hands about to meet, that lightning struck the main pole and sizzled down the guy wires, filling the air with a blue radiance that Harry Avalon must certainly have seen through the cloth of his blindfold as the tent buckled and the edifice¹ toppled him forward, the swing
55 continuing and not returning in its sweep, and Harry going down, down into the crowd with his last thought, perhaps, just a prickle of surprise at his empty hands.

My mother once said that I'd be amazed at how many things a person can do within the act of falling. Perhaps, at the time, she was teaching me to dive off a board at the town pool, for I associate the idea with midair somersaults. But I also
60 think she meant that even in that awful doomed second one could think, for she certainly did. When her hands did not meet her husband's, my mother tore her blindfold away. As he swept past her on the wrong side, she could have grasped his ankle, the toe-end of his tights, and gone down clutching him. Instead she changed direction. Her body twisted toward a heavy wire and she managed to
65 hang on to the braided metal, still hot from the lightning strike. Her palms were burned so terribly that once healed they bore no lines, only the blank scar tissue of a quieter future. She was lowered, gently, to the sawdust ring just underneath the dome of the canvas roof, which did not entirely settle but was held up on one end and jabbed through, torn, and still on fire in places from the giant spark, though
70 rain and men's jackets soon put that out.

Three people died, but except for her hands, my mother was not seriously harmed until an overeager rescuer broke her arm in extricating² her and also, in the process, collapsed a portion of the tent bearing a huge buckle that knocked her

Continued

¹edifice—a structure

²extricating—freeing

unconscious. She was taken to the town hospital, and there she must have
75 hemorrhaged, for they kept her, confined to her bed, a month and a half before her
baby was born without life.

Harry Avalon had wanted to be buried in the circus cemetery next to the
original Avalon, his uncle, so she sent him back with his brothers. The child,
however, is buried around the corner, beyond this house and just down the
80 highway. Sometimes I used to walk there just to sit. She was a girl, but I rarely
thought of her as a sister or even as a separate person really. I suppose you could
call it the egocentrism of a child, of all young children, but I considered her a less
finished version of myself.

It was during her confinement in the hospital that my mother met my
85 father. . . . Once my father and mother married, they moved onto the old farm he
had inherited but didn't care much for. . . . It still seems odd to me, when they
could have gone anywhere else, that they chose to stay in the town where the
disaster had occurred, and which my father in the first place had found so
constricting. It was my mother who insisted upon it, after her child did not survive.
90 And then, too, she loved the sagging farmhouse with its scrap of what was left of a
vast acreage of woods and hidden hay fields that stretched to the game park.

I owe my existence, the second time then, to the two of them and the hospital
that brought them together. That is the debt we take for granted since none of us
asks for life. It is only once we have it that we hang on so dearly.

95 I was seven the year the house caught fire, probably from standing ash. It can
rekindle, and my father, forgetful around the house and perpetually exhausted from
night hours on call, often emptied what he thought were ashes from cold stoves
into wooden or cardboard containers. The fire could have started from a flaming
box, or perhaps a buildup of creosote inside the chimney was the culprit. It started
100 right around the stove, and the heart of the house was gutted. The baby-sitter,
fallen asleep in my father's den on the first floor, woke to find the stairway to my
upstairs room cut off by flames. She used the phone, then ran outside to stand
beneath my window.

When my parents arrived, the town volunteers had drawn water from the fire
105 pond and were spraying the outside of the house, preparing to go inside after me,
not knowing at the time that there was only one staircase and that it was lost. On
the other side of the house, the superannuated³ extension ladder broke in half.
Perhaps the clatter of it falling against the walls woke me, for I'd been asleep up to
that point.

110 As soon as I awakened, in the small room that I now use for sewing, I

Continued

³superannuated—retired

smelled the smoke. I followed things by the letter then, was good at memorizing instructions, and so I did exactly what was taught in the second-grade home fire drill. I got up, I touched the back of my door before opening it. Finding it hot, I left it closed and stuffed my rolled-up rug beneath the crack. I did not hide under
115 my bed or crawl into my closet. I put on my flannel robe, and then I sat down to wait.

Outside, my mother stood below my dark window and saw clearly that there was no rescue. Flames had pierced one side wall, and the glare of the fire lighted the massive limbs and trunk of the vigorous old elm that had probably been
120 planted the year the house was built, a hundred years ago at least. No leaf touched the wall, and just one thin branch scraped the roof. From below, it looked as though even a squirrel would have had trouble jumping from the tree onto the house, for the breadth of that small branch was no bigger than my mother's wrist.

Standing there, beside Father, who was preparing to rush back around to the
125 front of the house, my mother asked him to unzip her dress. When he wouldn't be bothered, she made him understand. He couldn't make his hands work, so she finally tore it off and stood there in her pearls and stockings. She directed one of the men to lean the broken half of the extension ladder up against the trunk of the tree. In surprise, he complied. She ascended. She vanished. Then she could be
130 seen among the leafless branches of late November as she made her way up and, along her stomach, inched the length of a bough that curved above the branch that brushed the roof.

Once there, swaying, she stood and balanced. There were plenty of people in the crowd and many who still remember, or think they do, my mother's leap
135 through the ice-dark air toward that thinnest extension, and how she broke the branch falling so that it cracked in her hands, cracked louder than the flames as she vaulted with it toward the edge of the roof, and how it hurtled down end over end without her, and their eyes went up, again, to see where she had flown.

I didn't see her leap through air, only heard the sudden thump and looked out
140 my window. She was hanging by the backs of her heels from the new gutter we had put in that year, and she was smiling. I was not surprised to see her, she was so matter-of-fact. She tapped on the window. I remember how she did it, too. It was the friendliest tap, a bit tentative, as if she was afraid she had arrived too early at a friend's house. Then she gestured at the latch, and when I opened the window
145 she told me to raise it wider and prop it up with the stick so it wouldn't crush her fingers. She swung down, caught the ledge, and crawled through the opening. Once she was in my room, I realized she had on only underclothing, a bra of the heavy stitched cotton women used to wear and step-in, lace-trimmed drawers. I remember feeling light-headed, of course, terribly relieved and then embarrassed

Continued

150 for her to be seen by the crowd undressed.

I was still embarrassed as we flew out the window, toward earth, me in her lap, her toes pointed as we skimmed toward the painted target of the fire fighter's net.

155 I know that she's right. I knew it even then. As you fall there is time to think. Curled as I was, against her stomach, I was not startled by the cries of the crowd or the looming faces. The wind roared and beat its hot breath at our back, the flames whistled. I slowly wondered what would happen if we missed the circle or bounced out of it. Then I wrapped my hands around my mother's hands. I felt the brush of her lips and heard the beat of her heart in my ears, loud as
160 thunder, long as the roll of drums.

Louise Erdrich (1954–)

Minnesota-born Erdrich, who began writing at an early age, is the author of several novels, poems, and short fiction works. She received the National Magazine Award for fiction in 1983 and 1987.

III. Questions 17 to 25 in your Questions Booklet are based on this essay.

GOTCHA!

In the course of a Shakespearean production in Toronto in 1987, there was a moment that briefly illustrated why contemporary society desperately needs literature and the literary imagination. The moment came just after the scene in *Henry V* in which some soldiers, about to leave for war, tearfully said
10 good-bye to their wives. As soon as the women were safely out of sight, martial music poured from loud-speakers, the men shouted with joy, and patriotic signs were paraded across the stage. One sign held a single word: "Gotcha!"

What was remarkable about that little piece of modernized Shakespeare was that it placed, in
20 the middle of a work from the greatest literary imagination of the ages, a graphic reminder of the 20th-century imagination at its meanest¹ and most degraded.

Not everyone in the Canadian audience understood why "Gotcha!" was there. This was the English Shakespeare Company, and the reference was to something that
30 happened in England five years earlier. On the afternoon of May 3, 1982, west of the Falkland Islands, torpedos from a British submarine

hit the General Belgrano, an Argentine cruiser. Almost immediately the ship began to sink. When the news of this victory reached London, the *Sun*, a hugely successful tabloid, put a one-word
40 headline on the next morning's front page: Gotcha!

This quickly became famous as a symbol of blind jingoism,² but it was also a spectacular instance of failed imagination. The people who put that headline on their newspaper were victims of the peculiar callousness that afflicts all of us to some degree. What they did was
50 hideously inappropriate, but it was also in a sense consistent with their training, and consistent with the atmosphere of this period in history.

During the sinking, about 300 sailors, many of them teenage conscripts,³ choked to death on smoke, burned to death in oil or boiling water, or sank to the bottom of the sea. The rest of the crew, 800
60 or so, spent 36 hours floating on rafts in icy water, praying for rescue. The appropriate response to any such event is pity and terror, but the response of the people at the *Sun* was boyish glee. The *Sun* had already been treating the Falklands

Continued

¹meanest—lowest

²jingoism—extreme nationalism

³conscripts—young men forced to serve in the armed forces

War⁴ as a kind of video game, a clash of abstract forces with no human meaning. The ships, the
70 submarines, the helicopters and the people on them were no more consequential than flickers of electric light on a screen.

Flickers of light are the problem—perhaps the greatest mass emotional problem of our era. Flickers of light on the television screen, or the movie screen, have become our principal means of receiving
80 information about distant reality. Television brings us close to certain forms of reality, such as war in the Persian Gulf,⁵ but it also separates us emotionally from whatever it shows us. The more we see, the less we feel. Television instructs us that one war looks much like another, one plane crash much like another; we lose our sense of the human
90 meaning of disaster. Mass communication deadens rather than enlivens us.

In the movies, too, we learn that the death of others is unimportant. For a quarter-century the movies have been teaching us that people who die by gunfire are usually only extras, or deserve to die.

Those who defend violence in
100 entertainment are quick to point out

that it has always been part of drama and literature—there's violence in the Bible, in Greek tragedies and, of course, in Shakespeare. But until our time, violence in drama and literature was given meaning. It was given weight. It was set in a context that made the appropriate response—pity and terror—possible. In
110 Shakespeare, no one dies without a purpose. One moral of the Shakespeare history plays is that those who kill their kings will live to rue⁶ it. Certainly those plays tell us, again and again, that the results of killing are never negligible—and that they will be felt for generations.

On the other hand, the editor who wrote: "Gotcha!" later said, "I agree that headline was a shame. But it wasn't meant in a blood-curdling way. We just felt excited and euphoric. Only when we began to hear reports of how many men died did we begin to have second thoughts." There speaks a sadly crippled imagination, desperately in need of literature.

The future of literature is in
130 question. The novel is no longer, for most people, the central means of expressing a culture. Poetry is read by only a few. Literary studies no longer stand at the centre of the

Continued

⁴Falklands War—brief war (1982) between Argentina and Great Britain over possession of the Falkland Islands

⁵war in the Persian Gulf—war between Iraq and the U.S., which began on January 19, 1991, and lasted until the end of February 1991

⁶to rue—to regret

university curriculum. Some of literature's tasks, such as social observation, are often accomplished better by movies and TV programs. Even in the bookstores, literature is often pushed aside by journalism, how-to manuals and cookbooks.

But literature remains the core of civilized life precisely because it is the only reliable antidote to everything in our existence that diminishes us. Only the literary imagination can save us from the deadening influence of visual news and visual entertainment. When it works as it should, literature takes us beyond our parochialism⁷ into other minds and other cultures. It makes us know that even our enemies, even anonymous Argentinian sailors, are as humanly diverse as we are.

If we let it, literature can also save us from the narrowing effect of politics. Politics teaches us to see the world in functional terms, defined by power blocs and national borders and pressure groups. Pretending to offer freedom, politics asks us to identify ourselves by ethnicity or gender or class or nationality. Literature, on the other hand, dares us to feel our way across all boundaries of thought and feeling.

One of the more beautiful stories I've read in recent years was written by an Asian Trinidadian Canadian man, speaking in the voice of a

Japanese woman: the writer, and his grateful readers, simply refused to be contained by the limits the world regards as normal. This is the immense power that literature puts in the hands of all of us.

In the same way, literature offers us the opportunity to escape the two most pressing forms of bondage in our normal existence: time and ego. Emotionally and intellectually, literature dissolves the rules of time and beckons us toward Periclean Athens, Czarist Russia, Elizabethan England, and a thousand other moments in the past. By lengthening our sense of time, it saves us from the maddening urgencies of the present. And when it succeeds on the highest level, it breaks the shell of our intense and tiresome self-consciousness. It forces itself inside the egotism fostered by the pressures of our lives and links us with human history and the vast ocean of humanity now on Earth. By taking us into other lives, it deepens our own.

Our clear task, if we hope to realize ourselves as a civilization, is to cherish the writers who have done their work and nourish the writers who are still doing it. The literary imagination is not a grace of life or a diversion: it is the best way we have found of reaching for the meaning of existence.

Robert Fulford (1932–)

Fulford lives in Toronto and writes a weekly column in the *National Post*. He contributes to CBC radio and TV programs.

⁷parochialism—being restricted to a narrow point of view

- IV. Robin recently gave a brief oral report on the essay “Gotcha!” She is now revising this report to publish it in the school newspaper. Read the first revised draft of Robin’s report, carefully noting her revisions, and answer questions 26 to 32 in your Questions Booklet.

Why Read?

In preparation for my English 33 report dealing with literature and mass communication, I read ^{an interesting} ~~a neat~~ ^{entitled} essay called “Gotcha!” written by the Canadian author Robert Fulford. I was attracted to this article because I wondered why anyone would choose this title.

- 5 In 1982, when the British were fighting Argentina over the Falkland Islands, they torpedoed an Argentine cruiser. A London newspaper used the headline “Gotcha!” when it reported the sinking. Robert Fulford says that this showed how “degraded” the imagination has become in the 20th century. He notes that 300 ^{, including many teenagers,} ~~sailors died horrible deaths, including many teenagers.~~ According to Robert
- 10 Fulford, the London newspaper treated the war ^{as if it were} ~~like it was~~ a video game and all the individuals losing their lives were like “flickers on the screen.” The newspaper’s editor apologized later for publishing such a “shameful” headline. Apparently, in their excitement, the headline writers had forgotten that real people [!] had died.

- 15 Robert Fulford ^{argues} ~~says~~ that “The more we see, the less we feel” because “Mass communication deadens us rather than enlivens us.” He uses the war in the Persian Gulf as an example. Did you watch the coverage of the war referred to as “Desert Storm” in your Social Studies class? My friends and me

Continued

did. We thought that the stealth bombers did a great job hitting their targets and
20 getting back to their bases. We forgot that people were being killed. ^{Only some} ~~None of the~~
^{ever} viewers [^]asked about the purpose of this war. The war had become just another
stupid entertainment program.

Robert Fulford mentions that television and movies do not really connect us
to what is happening in our world. He says that books are different because
25 literature “dares us to feel our way across all boundaries of thought and feeling.”
Reading gives us the time to think and feel because the words don’t just flash
past. Some writers, such as H.G. Wells, have warned us about the future [;] other
writers, such as Charles Dickens, have encouraged us to make improvements to
society. If we forget ^{how to} think and feel, [^]our fate may be like the fate of
30 Winston Smith in *Nineteen Eighty-Four*. We may have to live in an unfeeling
society where those in power will say [!] “Gotcha.”

V. Questions 33 to 41 in your Questions Booklet are based on this poem.

GARDENS

Moving away from winter, he retires
to the coast, westering, mile zero,¹

land's end. And what of a garden
I ask? Is there room for that?

5 Yes, but of a different kind
from the ones he remembers,

the sweet peas his mother planted,
her hands pale spiders in the earth,

10 the cabbage and potatoes, the anemone²
of dill, the rows of beans and beans.

On the coast the soil is thin, a linen
napkin over stones. There, he says,

he'll grow different things, some basil,
a little thyme. He plants the seeds already

15 in his mind, no fear of frost,
the summer's long, herbs grow

on stony constellations, air
moves in from the sea with its smells

20 of eternity. Back where he was born
his mother now would be soaking seeds

in a shallow bowl, snow outside the window.
He'd give anything to be there,

Continued

¹mile zero—most westerly point of the Trans-Canada Highway, at land's end in Beacon Hill Park,
Victoria, B.C.

²anemone—cup-shaped flower

crossing time as if it were
a landscape he had dreamed, a garden

25 large enough to hold desire. She
spreads the packages of seeds

like a deck of cards on the kitchen table,
a royal flush, a winning hand.

30 She lets him rearrange the rows,
placing peas by broccoli,

carrots by tomatoes, marigolds
along the border. On the coast

he says the names out loud:
Early Bird. Sweet William. Everlasting.

35 He can see the sun breaking up
the clouds, pools of light

along the window sill, the oilcloth³
his mother wipes and wipes,

40 setting supper plates for people
he'll never see again,

he and she in another time, waiting
for the earth to tilt.

Lorna Crozier (1948–)

Crozier's poetry, inspired by the Saskatchewan prairies
and her observations of people, has received literary awards.
She teaches creative writing at the University of Victoria.

³oilcloth—waterproof tablecloth

VI. Questions 42 to 52 in your Questions Booklet are based on this scene from a television play.

The setting is Toledo, Ohio, in the middle of the 1950s.

Earlier in the day, Marilyn had given her father, JOE, \$15.00 so that he would have some money with him when he went to meet a former business associate about a job prospect. Marilyn went on to meet her boyfriend for lunch. During lunch, Marilyn's boyfriend proposed marriage, and Marilyn accepted.

from THE BIG DEAL

CHARACTERS:

JOE MANX—former building contractor

WIFE—his wife, Doris

DAUGHTER—his daughter, Marilyn

(Dissolve to: The front hallway of a four-and-a-half room apartment. We are looking at the front door, which now opens and admits JOE MANX. He closes the door behind him, takes off his hat, puts it on the mail table. Then, carrying himself with a sort of bantam¹ erectness, he passes into the living room. The camera ambles along after him.

The living room is furnished with what had been good, solid, expensive middle-class furniture two decades ago. The dominating piece in the living room is a large dark mahogany table with thick, intricately carved legs. At the head of the table is a massive chair with thick armrests, obviously the chair of the master of the house. It is to this chair that JOE marches. He takes off his jacket, drapes it around the back of the chair, rolls up his shirt sleeves two turns, loosens his tie, unbuttons his collar, and then sits down in the chair, placing his arms on the armrests. For a moment he just sits there, enjoying a small feeling of majesty. Then he lifts his head and calls out.)

15 JOE: I'm home!

(The WIFE appears in the kitchen doorway. She is a strong woman of about fifty. She is dressed in a house dress and is carrying a dish towel. On her face there is the anticipatory smile of someone who is about to impart a secret. Her secret becomes immediately apparent when the daughter appears behind her in the kitchen doorway.)

Continued

¹bantam—aggressive and spirited

- WIFE** (*Surveying her husband with that smile*): Joe, I got something in the nature of a pleasant shock to tell you, so get a good hold on your chair. I don't want you to fall off and hit your head on the floor. (*She comes into the living room, takes a chair at the far end of the table.*)
- 25 **JOE**: I ran across a very interesting proposition today.
- DAUGHTER** (*Also sidling² into the room, wearing a smile*): Hello, Pa.
- JOE**: I was down the Municipal Building. I was with Martin Kingsley. Martin was having a little permit trouble, so he says to me: "Joe, come on down with me to the Housing Department." After all, Commissioner Gerber is a
- 30 very good friend of mine. He figured I might put in a couple of good words for him.
- WIFE**: Did you talk to Harry Gerber about that other matter?
- JOE**: Doris, I'm telling a story, don't interrupt. Well, all right, I went down to the Municipal Building. I'm standing in the hallway by the water fountain.
- 35 I went over to get a drink . . . so . . .
- WIFE**: Joe . . .
- JOE**: A man comes over to me. A big fat bald-headed man. He looks at me, he says: "Aren't you Joe Manx?" So I look at him, I say: "You'll have to excuse me. Your face is familiar, but I can't quite place you." So he looks at
- 40 me, he says: "I'm Louie Miles!" Doris, you remember Louie Miles? Seventeen, eighteen years ago. He was a plasterer.
- WIFE**: Joe . . .
- JOE**: It seems he's a big construction man now in Cleveland. Well, that's neither here nor there. So anyway, we got to talking about this and that and it seems
- 45 that he's bought himself a piece of land, about fifteen acres, out near Willaston, with the intention of putting up sixty or eighty houses, small ranch houses, fifteen thousand, maybe sixteen-fifty tops. Well, he starts to dig a little, and Boom! He runs into water. I said to him: "Louie, for heaven's
- 50 sakes, if you would have asked me, I would have told you. The whole Willaston area is nothing but marshland." Well, the upshot of it is, he wants to sell the land. We made a date for four o'clock at the Statler Hotel. (*Rises, crosses to his* **DAUGHTER**.) Sweetheart, I wonder if you would do me a very big favor.
- DAUGHTER**: Sure, Pa.
- 55 **JOE**: I wonder if you could get me a small glass of cold water. I'm very thirsty.
- DAUGHTER**: Sure. (*She promptly exits into the kitchen.*)
- JOE**: Well, I began to do a little quick thinking. If I had one hundred and fifty acres of that land, that's six million square feet . . . with a fifty-foot frontage, I could put up a thousand houses. With a thousand houses, it's worth the
- 60 trouble and expense of draining. Now, my dear lady, we are talking in terms

Continued

²*sidling*—moving sideways

of a million-dollar proposition. One thousand small houses, nothing big, low-income houses, like that Levittown in New York. . . . Have you any idea how much money that man Levitt made? Countless millions! Countless! (*The DAUGHTER returns with the glass of water, which she sets at her father's place.*) Thank you, sweetheart, thank you.

65 **WIFE:** Joe, Marilyn also ran across a very interesting proposition today.

JOE: The upshot of it all was, at four o'clock, I went to the Statler. . . . I said: "Louie, what do you think of this idea? Louie," I said, "why don't we buy up another hundred and fifty, hundred and sixty more acres, and instead of

70 setting up a lousy sixty houses, we'll set up a thousand!" Well, I'll tell you something. If you ever saw a man get shocked, you should have seen Louie Miles's face when I said that. He looked at me like I was crazy.

WIFE: He was right, too.

JOE: That's very funny. When I built those houses on Chestnut Street and Halsey

75 Street and King Boulevard, everybody also looked at me like I was crazy.

WIFE: That was in 1934.

JOE: That whole Chestnut Street district was nothing but swamps. Snakes and frogs. The grass was so high you could get lost in it.

WIFE: All right, Joe, what was the upshot of it all with Louie Miles?

80 **JOE:** The upshot of it all was that he couldn't see it. He wants to sell that fifteen acres. He wants to get out of the whole deal. So I said to him: "Louie, what do you want for that fifteen acres?" So he says: "Four thousand dollars." So I said: "Louie, I may take that land right off your hands." And that's the way it stands at this moment.

85 **WIFE:** As long as you were down the Housing Department today, did you go in and see Harry Gerber? (*JOE suddenly scowls.*)

JOE: Doris, I want to get one thing straight right now. I don't want to hear anything more about Harry Gerber. I don't need your advice and counsel. It seems to be your pleasure to make fun of me. . . .

90 **WIFE:** I don't make fun of you, Joe.

JOE: As far as you're concerned, I'm a big talker without a nickel to his name, who thinks he's a big shot. All right, I'm broke. I'm strapped. But I was once the biggest builder in this city, and I'm still a respected name in the trade. Go to Frank Daugherty and Sons. Mention the name of Joe Manx, see

95 what he says. Deputy Housing Commissioner Harry Gerber still calls me up once or twice a week for a little advice. State Senator Howard Schram came halfway across a restaurant to ask my opinion about a bill he's pushing through up in Columbus. So when I tell you this is a million-dollar proposition don't be so clever. Don't be so smart. When I die, there will be a

Continued

100 million dollars in my will, don't worry. (*Returns to his master chair, sits down, disgruntled and scowling. An uncomfortable silence falls over the family. At last, DAUGHTER leans to her father.*)

DAUGHTER (*Smiling*): Pa, I'm getting married Friday. (*JOE turns his head slowly and regards the DAUGHTER with open-mouthed shock.*)

105 JOE: When did this happen?

DAUGHTER: Just at lunch, just after I saw you.

WIFE: I told you we had a shock for you.

JOE: Well, for heaven's sakes! Which one is this, the doctor? George? (*The DAUGHTER nods her head happily.*) Well, where is he, for heaven's sakes?

110 This calls for some kind of a celebration. Seems to me we should have some wine, a little festivity. For heaven's sakes! A man comes walking home, and his daughter casually remarks, she's getting married! Listen, call him up on the phone, tell him to come over tonight. . . .

DAUGHTER (*Smiling*): He's on duty tonight, Pa.

115 JOE: I'm taking the whole bunch of us out for a real celebration.

DAUGHTER: He's coming over tomorrow night, Pa. (*JOE is staring at his WIFE, who is beaming.*)

JOE: What are you sitting there in a house dress for? Your daughter's getting married. Go put some lipstick on, for heaven's sakes!

120 WIFE: I just found out myself fifteen minutes ago.

DAUGHTER: Pa . . .

JOE: What's the fanciest restaurant in town?

WIFE: I got chicken in the stove now.

JOE: We'll eat it cold tomorrow. (*He is herding his WIFE out of her chair.*) Come

125 on. Into the bedroom. Put on a dress with feathers on it. Joe Manx's daughter gets married, this town is going to hear about it.

DAUGHTER (*Laughing . . . to the WIFE, who is being crowded to the door*): All right, Ma. I feel like celebrating myself.

WIFE (*Over her HUSBAND'S shoulder to her DAUGHTER*): Marilyn, do me a favor.

130 Go in the kitchen, turn off all the fires.

DAUGHTER: Sure, Ma.

(*The WIFE exits. The DAUGHTER goes into the kitchen. JOE stands by the kitchen doorway.*)

JOE (*More or less to MARILYN in the kitchen*): Well, this is certainly an occasion.

135 A nice young fellow. He's going to make a success out of himself. In a couple of years, mark my words, he'll be making twenty, thirty thousand bucks a year . . . (*Crosses to the kitchen doorway and stands on the threshold watching his DAUGHTER.*) Under a little different circumstances, I would

Continued

140 have given you two kids a wedding, the whole city of Toledo would talk
about it for weeks. I'd have a thousand dollars' worth of cold cuts alone.
You'd have some big shots at your wedding, believe me! State Senator
Howard Schram would be there, I can tell you that. They'd pour the whisky
out of barrels. The ballroom would be littered with drunks. Very important
145 drunks. Men worth in the millions. (*The DAUGHTER joins him at the kitchen
doorway and stands listening to him with a smile of deep fondness and
understanding. For a moment JOE returns her gaze, obviously very fond of
his DAUGHTER. Then his eyes drop. His voice lowered.*) Marilyn, I'll need a
couple of bucks to cover the evening. It might come as much as twenty,
twenty-five dollars.

150 **DAUGHTER** (*Smiling*): Sure, Pa. (*She reaches out with her hand and lightly
touches his face. Then she turns and moves to the dining-room table, where
her purse lies. Camera stays on JOE for close-up. His eyes are closed. He
has to control himself, or else he would cry.*)

Paddy Chayefsky (1923–1981)
Chayefsky, an American playwright and screenwriter,
received the Best Screenplay Oscar three times for:
Marty (1955), *The Hospital* (1971), and *Network* (1976).

VII. Questions 53 to 62 in your Questions Booklet are based on this excerpt from a short story.

from LEG

When Dave Long tagged up and tried for third, everyone had to laugh. A bonehead move, and, for Dave—typically a prudent guy—uncharacteristic. As he took off, Dave laughed, too, at his own folly. Church-league softball, one gone in the last inning, not a blessed thing on the line—the game was without meaning and out of reach—and he went on a shallow fly to left.

“Good [grief],” his wife, Susan, said to the woman next to her. She was sitting in the aluminum bleachers with the rest of the Bethany Baptist bunch. . . .

“What the heck is he doing?” she said.

Dave was trying for third. There was no question: he knew he should stay at second, he should not go, and he went. The left fielder, Pastor Jeff, of the Alliance Church, had a cannon.¹ He looked at Dave as if Dave were pursued by demons. Pastor Jeff spoke to him. In shallow left field he was close enough to speak to Dave as he headed for third.

“Where are you going, Dave?” Pastor Jeff said. “You’re dead, man.”

. . . Pastor Jeff had the straight truth here: Dave *was* dead. To rights. Dave had been fast, but he was forty-four now, and he was too slow to pull this sort of stunt.

Dave’s son, his only child, Randy, stood a way off, down the third-base line, behind the Cyclone fence.² He was hanging from the fence as if tethered there, his arms stretched out above his head, his fingers laced through the wire, the toes of his sneakers wedged in the bottommost holes. He shook his head back and forth, almost violently. Randy was thirteen. He had not wanted to come watch his father play. . . .

Randy was a big, strong kid. He was, almost all the time now, angry at his father. He could tolerate his mother, but everything about Dave, who you would have thought the more approachable parent, enraged him.

Randy hated the way Dave dressed. He hated his whole wardrobe, in particular a blue down jacket Dave had had for years and wore when he drove Randy to school on winter mornings.

“You garbageman,” Randy would say to him. “You look like a garbageman. You grunge monkey.”

Dave liked this latter expression; he tried not to smile.

“Laugh,” Randy said. “Laugh. The garbagemen dress better than you do.”

Continued

¹cannon—strong throwing arm

²Cyclone fence—type of chain-link fence used to enclose playgrounds and sports fields

Dave's beard, which he kept respectably trimmed, made Randy angry.
35 "No kisses, wolfman," Randy said, if Dave bent over his bed to kiss him good night. "You werewolf. You're scaring me, wolfman."

Randy spoke with stage disdain of Dave's friends. Dave's car, a Taurus wagon, was boring and dumb—for Randy, an emblem of all that was insufferable and pedestrian about his father. But the thing that really drove Randy wild was
40 that Dave liked to read. Dave rose every morning at five so he could spend a quiet hour reading and thinking and praying. Which left him irredeemable in Randy's eyes. If Dave sent Randy to his room or otherwise disciplined him—this happened more often than Dave wanted—Randy would say, in his cruellest, most hateful voice, "Why don't you just go read a book, Mr. Reading Man. Mr.
45 Vocabulary. Go pray, you praying mantis."³

Watching Randy in his father's presence—the way his face went tight, the way his back stiffened—listening to the explosive, primitive noises he made in place of speech, you could see the boy's anger was beyond his control and understanding. It had sandbagged the kid, hit him blind side. It made Dave very
50 sad. He missed the easy love of his son. He missed talking to Randy, he missed his companionship, and he felt sorry for him, because in the periodic rests between peals of rage, when he took breath, Randy was clearly dazed and spent and, himself, sad.

Sometimes it was hard for Dave to remember that this abrasive, scowling
55 thing, always coming at him, was his own son. Randy would bump him or leer or growl, make some foul and belligerent gesture, and before he'd had time to set or check himself, Dave would have responded in kind. "You shut your mouth, punk, or I'll shut it for you," Dave might say. He would grab Randy's arm above the elbow and squeeze it hard, trying to hurt him, and he would fill with regret and
60 shame.

Randy said, "Stupid. You're stupid," and Dave, slow but hellbent for third, heard him.

Shoot, Dave thought. Poor kid. What am I doing?

Pastor Jeff threw a rope⁴ to the third baseman, also named Jeff, who worked
65 in the auto-salvage yard. This layman Jeff caught the ball and straddled the bag, waiting for Dave, who was still only halfway there.

"Dumb," Randy said. "You are stupid." He untangled himself from the fence and turned his back to the field.

The third-base coach, Pastor Rick, senior pastor at Bethany Baptist, was at a
70 loss. When the ball left the bat, a weak fly, he had raised his hands, palms out,

Continued

³praying mantis—insect that holds its forelegs in a position that suggests hands folded in prayer

⁴threw a rope—ball that is thrown in an accurate, straight line

signalling Dave to stay put. “Hold up, Gomer,” he shouted, but it was too late—Dave had committed himself. . . .

75 A female fan on the Bethany side was yelling, “Slide, Dave, slide!” This was a joke, because no one slid in church league—the guys were too old, too sedate—and, besides, Dave was wearing shorts. Everyone laughed. Dave heard the call for him to slide, and he, too, found the proposition laughable.

80 Then he slid. He raised his right hand in a fist. He yelled, “Oh, mama!” And from six feet away, and at what was for him top speed, he slid into third. Under the tag. Around the tag, really. No one who watched could believe it. It was the best, the only hook slide anyone had ever seen in that church league.

85 The base paths were a hard, dry, gravelly dirt, and Dave tore up his leg. He stood up, called time, and limped off the bag. He looked down at his leg, the left, which was badly abraded from ankle to knee. Beneath a thin film of dirt, which Dave tried to wipe off with his hand, the leg was livid, strawberry, a crosshatch of cuts and gashes, bits of sand and gravel in the wounds.

Pastor Rick was beside him. He put his arm around Dave.

“Why did I do that?” Dave said. “Ouch.”

“Wild man. You O.K.?” Pastor Rick said. “Nice slide.”

“Thanks. I’m O.K. I think.”

90 “Can you walk? You want a runner?”

“Nah,” Dave said. “I’m fine.”

“You sure?”

“Yeah,” Dave said.

Pastor Rick patted Dave on the rump. “All right, then. Go get ’em.”

95 Dave turned to the crowd. He smiled sheepishly and waved.

Susan stood up in the stands.

“I’m O.K.,” he said.

100 “Big jerk,” she said to herself as she sat down. Then, to the woman next to her, “I don’t believe it.” She took a magazine out of her purse and looked at the cover. She stood up. She shook the magazine at Dave. He pretended to cower, and the crowd laughed.

105 Randy, who had wheeled to watch the play from the left-field foul line, was embarrassed: that his father slid; that his father slid in shorts and hurt himself sliding; that the slide, in this context . . . was inordinately, ridiculously good; and, on top of it all, that his mother had got into this bad circus act. Randy began to drift in his father’s direction, up the line. Dave watched his unwitting tack⁵ with gratitude and wonder. He looked at Randy, shrugged his shoulders, and smiled,

Continued

⁵tack—change in the course of direction or action

a bit goofily.

110 It was only when Dave smiled at him that Randy realized he was moving toward his father. He wrenched himself away. Randy turned and headed for the parking lot.

Dave's leg looked bad, painful, but it didn't really begin to hurt until after the next batter, Lloyd Weeks, who worked for Dave at the cereal plant, tapped a ground ball to the pitcher, stranding Dave at third and rendering perfectly
115 gratuitous⁶ his miracle slide. . . .

"Great slide," said Pastor Jeff to Dave. "I had you nailed."

"Never in doubt," Dave said.

Steven Polansky

Polansky's stories are recognized for the "humanness" of his characters as they experience difficulties in their lives. His stories have appeared in *The New Yorker* and *Harper's* magazine.

⁶gratuitous—unnecessary, needless, for nothing

VIII. Questions 63 to 70 in your Questions Booklet are based on this excerpt from an essay.

from CAROLINE “MOTHER” FULHAM: THE LADY KEPT PIGS

When Mrs. Caroline Fulham—better known as Mother Fulham—left Calgary in 1904, members of the police department breathed sighs of relief and prepared to celebrate the great day. Most other citizens were secretly sorry to see her go because she was, in those years before radio, television and movies, the best source of local amusement. As the leading entertainer on Stephen Avenue, she needed no make-up, required no rehearsal and followed no script. Her charm was in being herself, rough as it might be.

With a sharp Irish tongue and a loud voice, she had the last word in almost every argument and when more was needed, she could draw upon the persuasiveness of two ready fists. Plump and powerful, she was a fair match for the best policeman on the beat. For one reason or another, the police officers saw much of her and knew that to escort her to a cell was normally a task requiring the chief and two constables—the entire Calgary force for some years.

The lady could neither read nor write but such circumstances were not to restrict her in gaining publicity. Between visits to the police court and her daily appearances guiding her horse-drawn democrat¹ on Calgary streets, she became one of the best-known personalities in the community. And while police officers did their best to spare her from trouble, men and boys seeking fun delighted to tease and annoy her, knowing they would get instant and often exciting reaction.

Nor were those fellows above playing tricks on her, as on that day when she left her horse and democrat in the lane while she visited the long bar of the Alberta Hotel. In her absence, the pranksters unhitched the horse from the vehicle and then, after drawing the democrat shafts through the woven wire fence containing the railway right of way, rehitched with horse on one side of the fence and democrat on the other. In due course, the lady emerged from the hotel, feeling good enough to forgive all her enemies or make some new ones. Unsteadily, she walked to her democrat, mounted and clucked to her horse to move on before realizing that something was wrong and progress would be impossible. Sensing mischief, she seized her buggy whip and dismounted to search for the miscreants, all the while muttering threats of violence.

For most of her years in Calgary, Mother Fulham lived on 6th Avenue, just a short distance west of the site on which Knox United Church was built. Her

Continued

¹democrat—small, light carriage

occupation was that of keeping pigs. With no bylaws restricting livestock within the town, her pig feeding operations were entirely legal, even though they drew criticism from neighbors. To feed the swine, she gathered kitchen waste from Calgary's best
35 hotels and restaurants. Here was good and economical raw material for pork production and she chose to believe that she had a monopoly on the contents of all garbage containers behind the Alberta, Queen's, Royal and Windsor hotels, and Criterion and New Brunswick restaurants. When other feeders of pigs threatened to encroach upon her garbage preserves, she was prepared to protect her interests with
40 force if necessary. . . .

Although uneducated, her wit was keen, as Dr. H.G. Mackid could testify. Meeting her on Stephen Avenue and seeing her walking with lameness, he inquired sympathetically if he could do anything for her. She replied that an ankle had been giving her trouble, to which the kindly doctor invited her to step inside Templeton's
45 Drug Store where he could examine it. The doctor was, no doubt, aware that cleanliness was not one of the lady's obvious characteristics, but when she peeled down a stocking to expose the sore ankle, the doctor reeled at the sight of the unwashed limb and exclaimed impulsively, "By George, I'd bet a dollar there's not another leg in Calgary as dirty as that one."

50 Quick as a flash, the woman shouted back: "Put up your money, Doctor. I'm betting ye a dollar there is another and here's my money."

Before there was time for a retraction, Mother Fulham dropped her other stocking, thereby exposing another leg, just as dirty as the first one, and held out her hand to collect the doctor's dollar. . . .

55 There were altercations with police and neighbors that brought her name into the newspaper columns most often. And when she came to court, she would have nobody but the great Irish lawyer and personality, Paddy Nolan, to plead her case. Nolan may have enjoyed the assignments, even though he was never paid, because he was fascinated by the woman with the sharp tongue and was always assured of a big
60 courtroom audience. When it was known on the streets that Mother Fulham and Paddy Nolan would appear together, everybody in the community wanted to be present. Sometimes the woman would be evicted from the court for reasons of undisciplined remarks and sometimes spectators had reason to wonder if the police were prosecuting the Fulham woman or if she was prosecuting the police. . . .

65 On [one] occasion when Mrs. Fulham was charging rather than defending, she accused her neighbor, the Reverend Jacques, of insulting her with improper language. J. A. Loughheed acted for the reverend gentleman and Paddy Nolan, as usual, was on Mother Fulham's side. The evidence indicated that the woman had threatened to slaughter the minister's hens if they continued to wander onto her property and he
70 replied by calling her a "blackguard." She admitted that she did not know what the

Continued

word meant but was sure it was not a compliment. Paddy Nolan tried to take the argument from there, saying that his client was too often the object of barbs and insults. It was time the authorities took a stand against what looked like “a Fulham Extermination Society.” The lawyer for the defense replied that Mrs. Fulham was “a
75 notorious nuisance” in Calgary.² Because of her presence and occupation, property in the neighborhood had fallen in value. To this the lady replied with some well-chosen abuse for the lawyer and was promptly ordered removed from the court. The defendant was fined one dollar and everybody present agreed that it was worth at least that much to be in attendance for the amusement. . . .

80 Then there were the memorable negotiations about the Fulham cow, Nellie, which lost its life when hit by a CPR train. The owner made complaint, saying compensation would have to be high because Nellie was a very superior bovine. A hearing was convened and the railroad officials pointed out that “No Trespassing” signs were posted prominently and neither cow nor person had any right to be on the
85 railroad track.

But the cow’s owner proceeded to nullify that point of argument, saying, “Ye pur
fools, what makes ye think my pur old Nellie could read yer signs?” But failing to gain satisfaction from the company’s minor officials, the lady wrote to Sir William Van Horne, president, and when he happened to be in Calgary, she forced her way
90 into his private car and proceeded to hold him responsible for her loss. The president, with some feeling of sympathy, offered to find a replacement for the cow but that did not satisfy the woman because there was no other cow quite like Nellie. She contended it would take two cows to replace Nellie, but was obliged in the end to settle for one. . . .

95 Sure, she was often in trouble but deep in Calgary hearts was affection for Mother Fulham. Her spontaneity and unvarnished personality were refreshing, even on a frontier. Calgarians would have been disappointed if she did not mark St. Patrick’s Day by dressing in defiant green, or the twelfth of July³ by hurling shouts of derision at parading Orangemen.

100 But only those who watched her closely knew the generosity of her Irish heart. They alone knew the families she helped regularly with gifts of needed money, and the settler, Charlie Hawkes, who lost his three horses from glanders⁴ and had no money for replacements. The Sons of England presented him with twenty-five dollars but it was not enough. He met Mother Fulham on the street and told her of his
105 predicament. Without comment, she pulled up her dress, exposing one of the

Continued

²*Calgary Tribune*, December 2, 1891

³the twelfth of July—annual celebration of the Battle of the Boyne (1690), the battle in which William of Orange defeated the Irish Catholics, thus becoming King of England, Scotland, and Ireland

⁴glanders—highly contagious disease that affects horses

perpetually dirty knees, took a roll of bills from a stocking and pressed forty dollars into the man's hand. "That'll help ye buy a horse," she said.

. . . If Calgarians did not actually love the Queen of Garbage Row, at least they missed her very much when she "sold out her business and property" and went to

110 Vancouver to live.

Grant MacEwan (1902–2000)

In his 98 years of life, the Honorable Grant MacEwan gave Canada a legacy of contributions as an educator, writer, and politician.

He was the Lieutenant Governor of Alberta from 1965 to 1974.

Credits

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English 33: Part B

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